March 2, 2024

The Honorable Cheryl Youakim
Minnesota House of Representatives
Room 443, State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
St. Paul, MN 55155-1232

RE: HF 3492 (Lee) – Support

Dear Representative Youakim,

TechNet respectfully submits this letter in strong support of HF 3492 (Lee), which makes a series of important proposals to enhance computer science access and opportunity for Minnesota students.

TechNet is the national, bipartisan network of technology CEOs and senior executives that promotes the growth of the innovation economy by advocating a targeted policy agenda at the federal and 50-state level. TechNet's diverse membership includes dynamic American businesses ranging from startups to the most iconic companies on the planet and represents over 4.2 million employees and countless customers in the fields of information technology, artificial intelligence, e-commerce, the sharing and gig economies, advanced energy, transportation, cybersecurity, venture capital, and finance.

Computing is the fastest-growing, highest-paying, and largest sector of new jobs in the country. It is used in virtually every field, making it foundational knowledge for those entering the job market. Providing increased access to computer science education and career pathways is a critical step toward ensuring that the next generation of Minnesota remain competitive in the global economy. Given the demand for these careers, TechNet supports dedicated funding, as laid out in HF 3492, for sustained and robust training deliver the highest quality education to all students in K-12.

Typically, the challenge is that there are not enough teachers who are certified to teach computer science courses. This bill would seek to address that by establishing a computer science education training and recruitment grant to train and recruit computer science teachers in the state.

We also appreciate the sponsor's focus on increasing access for students to high-level STEM, computer science, information technology (IT), operational technology,

and coding courses, with a focus on underrepresented students including women, people of color, and individuals with disabilities. The technology industry is committed to promoting an inclusive workforce and nation that reflects the diversity of our customers and people. This legislation will help bridge that gap and offer the skills needed in the modern economy to many who have not previously had these opportunities.

In closing, we want to also personally thank Rep. Lee for her dedication to driving computer science education in the state. No one has done more in recent years to champion this issue, and we are grateful for her steadfast advocacy. For these reasons, TechNet strongly supports HF 3492.

Sincerely,

Tyler Diers
Executive Director, Midwest
TechNet

CC: Rep. Liz Lee